

Jo Hindley transcript

Mum and dad were married for over 60 years my mum was from the south of ireland and my dad was from the north of england and they met when dad and his sister when on a holiday to ireland so it was like a holiday romance

dad got dementia, diagnosed in 2012, mum looked after him at home, right through as far as she could um but it all became too much and we needed to seek care so initially dad went into a care home in Cambridgeshire, but then we moved them both over here to Birmingham. Mum moved in with dad for residential care so they , so that she could be really close alongside him, so really we did the long journey, about 7 years dementia journey with dad who died then end of 2018

mum stayed in the same room where she'd been throughout that particular care home but she was pretty well up to the end, then there was an accident such that she broke her leg and she never really completely got back on her feet I think really it presaged the way for her to make her exit gradually, she was 96 and er she then died last August,

i am proud of what we achieved with the funerals, i think um it felt like a really honest process that we had, I think that we had space to feel our way with what we wanted to do and that sort of it emerged as we went along,

we decided that we wanted to have as natural just environmentally a funeral as we could, a friend of ours had been very into that and we'd gone to a workshop she'd done actually which sort of raised my awareness a number of years ago about the impact of funerals on environmental ways and I had that book the, the good death book.

So we chose a cardboard coffin and actually the most therapeutic and beautiful parts of the preparation of the funeral was painting the coffin, and we had the coffin on the dining room table here and mum was painting aswell,

we made it a day out really, the actual funeral because then after this meeting for worship we had in the church, the funeral bit , we um we hired a vintage bus that then took us out to Westall Park so sort of wanting to try and reduce the number of people who were driving there really but also wanting to travel together and that was great just to all go on the bus I feel really that we did him proud and dad would have enjoyed that, mum enjoyed that and she enjoyed that sense of everybody travelling with us and we came back and shared food.

So when it came to mum's turn we knew much better and felt very confident what she would like. So we did sort of a similar sort of thing, Mum wasn't so concerned about the vintage bus side of things so we had a coach, And we sang as we went and then it came to the actual burial bit. Everybody heaved ho with spades to help shovel and you know fill in the grave and that was just really good to feel that connection and that just honesty with the earth, and the end of her

life on earth so yeah no I felt really proud of it in the sense of how it brought a whole community together really I think it's really important for um for a community, to have the opportunity to come together to mark that person's passing when the time comes, but also um for those people to come together to meet each other and share and support one another really and er when we had the sort of get together the night before my mum's funeral um it was just beautiful the different people who wanted to come and you know who just came for a cup of tea or whatever and um we had the coffin's presence here, people process their own um bereavements through going to other people's funerals i think too, so i think there's opportunities there for people to talk about you know who they've lost and how they marked it and felt about it so it's just a natural time for sharing really.

I don't think people are given all the choices they should be given really about that process.

I feel very strongly about it especially as a midwife where, a lot of women and family aren't given the choices really about labour and birth. I think those most important entrances and exits are often taken of people's hands by, by people who think they know better, as a midwife one of my jobs has been helping people prepare for labour and for birth and to know their choices, and, so similarly for, for death and dying and for the funeral I felt that was what I was seeking really for us to do that, to make those choices, of course some people don't want to make those choices and that choice is a choice, and that's fine but I wanted to be involved with those choices because that's how I am.